

Tregaron Offered as Embassy Site For Russians; U.S. Prefers Mt. Alto

By Carl Bernstein

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tregaron, the magnificent Cleveland Park estate of former Ambassador to Moscow Joseph E. Davies, was publicly offered for sale to the State Department yesterday as the site of a new Soviet embassy and chancery.

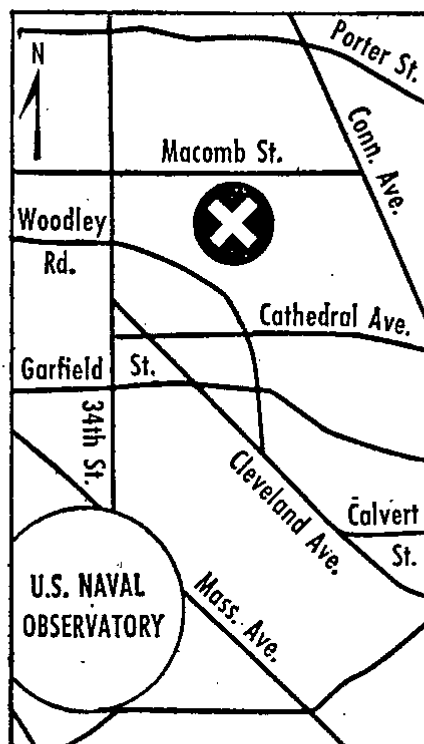
However, State Department sources said they rejected a similar offer last year to use the 20.5-acre estate for a Soviet embassy-chancery.

They indicated the Department will press plans to relocate the Soviet Union's diplomatic quarters on the site of Mount Alto Veterans Hospital.

The sources said Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin has tentatively approved the Mount Alto move.

Meanwhile, Soviet diplomats refused to comment on any specifics about a move from their crowded embassy at 1125 16th st. nw.

The offer to sell Tregaron



The Washington Post April 14, 1967

Cross locates Tregaron.

for \$3.5 million was contained in a letter from attorney Edmund Campbell to Protocol Chief James Symington.

Campbell, who represents

the late Ambassador's heirs, also offered to exchange the estate for \$3.5 million worth of land at the Mount Alto site.

Campbell said the Russians had assured him they "would much prefer Tregaron" to Mount Alto.

"In view of the fact that the Mount Alto property has an admitted value of not less than \$8 million, while Tregaron can be obtained for less than half this sum, and that the Russian government would apparently prefer Tregaron as a chancery site, our proposal to you would be in the best interests of the United States," the lawyer wrote to Symington.

State Department sources acknowledge that the Russians at one time expressed a preference for the Tregaron site but said they are willing to move just about anywhere that the neighbors will accept them.

An informal survey of home-
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TREGARON—
From AI

Tregaron Offered as Russian Embassy Site

owners in Cleveland Park revealed strong citizen opposition to the idea of having the Russians as neighbors, according to Department sources.

They said no substantial opposition to letting the Russians move in was expressed in a similar survey of residents of the high-rise apartments of Glover Park near Mount Alto.

According to representatives of the Davies estate, the offer to sell or trade Tregaron for a chancery site was made public because of "foot-dragging" in the State Department.

State Department sources said, however, they thought a letter last Fall from the Department to Weaver Bros. Real Estate Inc.—the firm trying to sell Tregaron—formally rejected the idea of the Russians using the estate.

Since then, the sources said, the Russians have agreed in principle to moving to Mount Alto, in exchange for new American chancery offices the Soviet Union must provide in Moscow.

Formal negotiations between the two countries are expected to begin on the matter within 60 days, according to State Department officials.

Campbell, in an interview explaining his letter to Symington, said his offer would allow the Russians to move into Tregaron without applying for a zoning variance.

He acknowledged that the Russians have refused to buy Tregaron directly from Weaver Bros. because "they are timid about getting chancery zoning."

If the State Department were to make the purchase or agree to the Mount Alto trade, he said, no rezoning of Tregaron would be necessary because the embassy site would belong to the Federal Government.

Despite support from Secre-

tary of State Dean Rusk and the late President Kennedy, the Russians were thwarted in their efforts in 1964 to relocate their embassy on the Bonnie Brae Estate in Chevy Chase.

A rezoning to permit the move was reversed in District Court.

The Soviet Embassy's press office said yesterday it had "no information" on the Tregaron offer but nevertheless referred a reporter to "the man who is handling the leasing."

However, Second Embassy Secretary Vladimir Kuleshev—to whom the reporter was referred—said he has "nothing to do with this. I think this is a mistake . . . I don't know who would know anything about it."

Kuleshev also refused to comment on his government's reaction to moving next door to the Embassy of Nationalist China.

Tregaron, one of the largest estates in Washington, is at 3100 Macomb st. nw. Three sides of the estate are bounded by parkland, the other by the Chinese Embassy.

Davies, who served as ambassador to Russia from 1936 to 1938 and later as a special envoy for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, opened the grounds of Tregaron to visitors every year for an azalea festival.

In addition to the huge main house, the property contains a golf course, several patios and a "dacha"—a copy of a Russian country home.

The main building, which recently housed offices of the Comsat Corp., is now used by the L'Enfant Montessori School.

Tregaron is owned by Davies' daughters, Mrs. E. Fontaine Broun and Mrs. Lowell B. Ditzen of Washington and Mrs. Robert L. Grosjean of Bedford, N.Y.



The Washington Post

This is Tregaron, offered for sale for use as a new Soviet Embassy.